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# SAUDI IS REPORTED TO AGREE TO TERMS ON USE OF AWACS

## SHARING OF DATA AT ISSUE

### U.S. Aides Say Prince Relented on Intelligence Role in the Talks With Weinberger

By RICHARD HALLORAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25 — The Defense Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Sultan, has privately signed an agreement on conditions for Saudi operation of the Awacs planes to be sold to his nation, according to State Department, Pentagon and Congressional officials.

But it was not immediately clear whether the Saudi Defense Minister had accepted all the conditions that President Reagan had pledged agreement on before the Airborne Warning and Control System planes would be transferred to Saudi control. To help gain Senate approval of the \$8.5 billion sale, Mr. Reagan set down conditions last October and promised to get Saudi agreement to them. Delivery of the radar planes is scheduled to start in 1985.

#### Long Negotiations With Saudis

The officials said the agreement was signed, but not announced, after negotiations between Prince Sultan and Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger during the Secretary's visit to Saudi Arabia earlier this month. The officials said the negotiations, which included an overnight session that lasted until 4:45 A.M., took so long for at least two reasons.

The Saudis balked at signing anything that limited their control over the planes, contending that they would be buying them outright from the United States and should therefore have complete control over them, the American officials said.

The officials said the Saudis also asserted that they would not agree to share with the United States the intelligence information gathered by the so-

phisticated electronic gear aboard the planes. The American officials said Prince Sultan had relented, but it was not clear whether Mr. Weinberger had made concessions to gain Prince Sultan's signature.

#### Agreement 'in a Formal Way'

Since his visit to Saudi Arabia, Mr. Weinberger has said arrangements for the sale to the Saudis have been completed, but he has declined to say whether the agreement has been signed. But he told a gathering of Republicans and military lobbyists at breakfast Tuesday that the conditions "have now been agreed to in a formal way."

Mr. Weinberger was quoted as saying, "I think it was a very useful thing to have done, even though it did take all night to get it." He added, "I am very pleased that the conditions that the President laid down have now been agreed to in a formal way."

The Defense Secretary also said the Saudis "were anxious that it not be published at that time," adding: "I advised them that Congress would want to see it and we would want Congress to see it and therefore ultimately it would have to be made public. But it contains no surprises."

The United States Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Richard W. Murphy, has been in Washington for several days briefing members of Congress on the agreement. Mr. Murphy took part in the negotiations in Saudi Arabia.

The Middle East Policy Survey, a specialized newsletter, reported the Awacs agreement in an issue that was sent to subscribers tonight. Its account, citing State and Defense Department officials, was corroborated by Congressional officials.

The chief spokesman for the Defense Department, Henry E. Catto Jr., asked about reports of the Awacs agreement circulating here, said he had nothing to add to Mr. Weinberger's public statements.

During the heated debate over the Awacs sale last fall, President Reagan wrote to Senator Howard H. Baker Jr., the majority leader, saying United States officials "have reached agreement with the Saudi Government on a number of specific arrangements that go well beyond their firm agreement to abide fully by all the standard terms" in a law that all nations must accept when buying arms from the United States.

#### Certification to Congress

The President said "transfer of the Awacs will take place only on terms and conditions consistent with the act and only after we have certified to the Congress in writing" that the conditions had been met.

The President's letter said "a detailed plan for the security of equipment, technology, information and supporting documentation has been agreed to." It said the United States would have the right of continual inspection of "air and ground security arrangements for all equipment during the useful life of the Awacs."

The letter also said the Saudis had agreed not to share access to Awacs equipment, technology, or information with third countries. Some senators had objected to the possibility that other Arab nations could benefit from the Awacs.

In addition, the letter said, "The Saudi Awacs will be operated solely within the boundaries of Saudi Arabia except with the prior, explicit mutual consent of the two Governments, and solely for defensive purposes as defined by the U.S.," a provision evidently intended to reassure Israel and its supporters.

#### Clause Reportedly in Dispute

The clause that was reportedly in sharpest dispute during Mr. Weinberger's meetings with Prince Sultan said, "Saudi Arabia has agreed to share with the U.S. continuously and completely the information that it acquires from the use of the Awacs."

The radar aboard the Awacs can pick up aircraft flying 400 miles away when they are flying high and at the horizon when the targets are flying low. The four United States Air Force Awacs now in Saudi Arabia can monitor many air moves in the Iranian-Iraqi war. They can also see deep into Israel, which has caused strong objections to the sale from the Israelis.